

by a trenchcoat topping tall boots. As she  
pulls a hat down over her ears, he cries out  
in ecstasy and stains his trousers which he  
quickly changes while she holds the gun,  
panting with excitement.

#### A MAN IN ALABAMA FIGHTS THE DRYNESS

by digging his own  
well

so relentlessly  
that he pops out  
of the earth

between two Chinese.

He cannot see faces,  
only feel warm  
smooth stomachs.

They say, "Get out  
of here," tumbling  
him back to the States

where his wife finds  
him sitting on the edge  
of the hole.

"What happened?"

"I wish I knew," he says  
touching his cheek still  
warm

thinking about his son still  
in Viet-Nam bursting  
into tears.

-- Ronald Koertge

South Pasadena CA

you breathe out  
knowing as you breathe out  
there is nothing at the end  
of that breath  
to do

there is in me  
so much song  
yet my pen  
falters  
at a crumb!